

Policy #02:a,b,c  
**CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING THE VALIDATION OF MINISTRIES IN THE  
PRESBYTERY OF GREATER ATLANTA**

**COM Approval:** December 2013

**PGA Approval:** February 2, 2014

Policy #02a  
**FOR THOSE SEEKING ORDINATION**

It is anticipated that those seeking ordination will become teaching elders. Therefore, in compliance with the Book of Order, (G-2.0503) “a teaching elder...shall be engaged in a ministry validated by that presbytery...” and it shall:

- Demonstrate conformity with the mission of God’s people
- Serve and aid others, and enable the ministry of others
- Give evidence of theologically informed fidelity to God’s Word
- Be carried on in accountability for its character and conduct to the presbytery
- Include responsible participation in the deliberations, worship and work of the presbytery and in the life of a congregation of this church

As a large metropolitan area, many are drawn here because of the variety of opportunities. Others are restricted geographically due to their spouse’s employment.

In addition, a new reality of the church is the aging of both our members and the dissolving of our congregations. This reality calls us to a new sense of flexibility and creativity in new ways of defining pastoral service. Many who are qualified for parish ministry are unable to find such positions.

In an attempt to consider new realities while being faithful to the Book of Order regarding validated ministries, the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta puts forth the following criteria for validating ministries for ordination.

Guided by the General Assembly which categorizes various ministries (see Book of Order G-2.0503a1-4) and when the additional criteria is met, the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta will ordinarily ordain those who are called to:

1. Chaplaincy: in a variety of commonly recognized contexts such as military, correctional, healthcare, and educational institutions
2. Overseas Mission
3. Seminary Professors
4. Clinical Pastoral Education Supervisors
5. Governing body such as in the General Assembly or the Presbytery
6. Presbyterian related agencies such as Presbyterian Homes, and The Foundation
7. Recognized Christian Pastoral Counseling Center
8. Serving another denomination in a pastoral context
9. Non-installed pastoral positions within our bounds
10. Tentmaking if serving a PCUSA congregation within our bounds

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Additional Criteria to be met regarding the above:

1. Any hospital residency program must be for a minimum of one year.
2. The supervisor for any validated ministry must state that ordination is required for the position.
3. The person must be affiliated, or will affiliate if just relocated, with a local congregation in the presbytery or be involved with judicatory work on the Presbytery, Synod or GA level.
4. Each minister will ordinarily maintain his/her permanent and/or primary residence within the area commonly known as greater metropolitan Atlanta.
5. The expectation is that each validated minister will attend at least one Presbytery meeting a year.

Ministries seeking validation beyond the above lists will still be reviewed in the application process.

### **APPLICATION PROCESS**

An application is required to seek validation. The appropriate application for someone seeking ordination is Form Two.

If the subcommittee of COM does not approve the request for validation, the applicant may appeal to a sub-group of COM comprised of the two co-chairs of COM and the two co-chairs of the Care of Church Professionals by contacting the stated clerk and requesting such an interview.

If both an application and appeal, if requested, does not produce validation the person will not be ordained.

### **ANNUAL REPORTS**

As indicated by the Book of Order, every minister serving in a validated position is required to submit an annual report regarding your work. Our annual reports ordinarily are sent out in October/November in order to have them received by the end of December.

A minister will be notified up to two times if an annual report has not been received. After the third notification, which will be by certified mail, if the report is not received, the minister shall be placed on the inactive rolls of the presbytery. After one year of being on the inactive roll, if contact with the Stated Clerk has not been established, the minister shall be removed from the rolls.

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**CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING THE VALIDATION OF MINISTRIES IN THE  
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Policy #2b  
**FOR THOSE WHO ARE ALREADY ORDAINED**

In compliance with the Book of Order, (G-2.0503) a teaching elder...shall be engaged in a ministry validated by that presbytery..." and it shall:

- Demonstrated conformity with the mission of God's people
- Serve and aid others, and enable the ministry of others
- Give evidence of theologically informed fidelity to God's word
- Be carried on in accountability for its character and conduct to the presbytery
- Include responsible participation in the deliberations, worship and work of the presbytery and in the life of a congregation of this church

The Presbytery of Greater Atlanta has many types of ministries for which a teaching elder could be validated. As a large metropolitan area, many are drawn here because of the variety of opportunities. Others are restricted geographically due to their spouse's employment.

In addition, a new reality of church is the aging of both our members and the dissolving of our congregations. This reality calls us to a new sense of flexibility and creativity in new ways of defining pastoral service. Many who are qualified for parish ministry are unable to find such positions.

In an attempt to consider these realities while with being faithful to the Book of Order regarding validated ministries, the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta puts forth the following criteria for validating ministries for those who are ordained.

Guided by the General Assembly who categorizes various ministries, (see Book of Order G-2.0503a1-4) when the additional criteria are met, we will validate the ministries of to those who are called to:

1. Chaplaincy: in a variety of commonly recognized contexts such as military, hospital, correctional, healthcare and educational institutions
2. Campus Ministries
3. Overseas Mission
4. Seminary Professors
5. Governing body such as in the General Assembly or the Presbytery
6. Presbyterian related agencies such as Presbyterian Homes and The Foundation
7. Recognized Christian Pastoral Counseling Center
8. Serving another denomination in a pastoral context
9. Tentmaking if serving a PCUSA congregation within our bounds
10. Ecumenical organizations that have a specific relationship to the PCUSA and/or the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta

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Additional Criteria to be met regarding the above:

1. Any hospital residency program must be for a minimum of one year.
2. The supervisor for any validated ministry must state that ordination is recommended or required for the position. The applicant will also have the opportunity to discuss on the application why the ability to administer the sacraments enhances their ministry.
3. The person must be affiliated, or will affiliate if just relocated, with a local congregation in the presbytery or be involved with judicatory work on the Presbytery, Synod or GA level.
4. Each minister will ordinarily maintain his/her permanent and/or primary residence within the area commonly known as Greater Metropolitan Atlanta.
5. The expectation is that every validated minister shall attend at least one Presbytery meeting a year.

Ministries seeking validation beyond the above list will still be reviewed in the application process.

### **APPLICATION PROCESS**

An application is required to seek validation. The appropriate application for someone who is already ordained and seeking to have their ministry is Validated Form One available from the PGA Stated Clerk's Office.

If the subcommittee of COM does not approve the request for validation, the applicant may appeal to a sub group of the Committee on Ministry comprised of the two co-chairs of COM and the two co-chairs of the Care of Church Professionals by contacting the stated clerk and requesting such an interview.

If an application is not approved and if a requested appeal does not produce validation, the person (if already a member of the presbytery) will be placed on the minister-at-large of the presbytery. We do not have a time frame for ministers staying on the minister-at-large role as long as the minister continues to reside in our bounds, worships in one of our churches, and submits their annual reports.

The Presbytery of Greater Atlanta does not accept transfers of ministers who are at large.

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As indicated by the Book of Order, every minister serving in a validated position is required to submit an annual report regarding your work. Our annual reports ordinarily are sent out in October/November in order to have them received by the end of December.

A minister will be notified up to two times if an annual report has not been received. After the third notification, which will be by certified mail, if the report is not received, the minister shall be placed on the inactive rolls of the presbytery. After one year of being on the inactive roll, if contact has not been established, the minister shall be removed from the rolls.

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Policy #2c  
**CONFIRMING MINISTRY IN THE PRESBYTERY OF GREATER ATLANTA**

As ministry takes different forms at this time in history, it is clear that God is using many people in a wide variety of ways to expand, strengthen and increase the Kingdom.

The Presbytery of Greater Atlanta recognizes that Teaching Elders may be engaged in worthwhile and valuable ministries which do not meet the criteria for validation as spelled out in the Book of Order and the Presbytery's guidelines for validating ministries. At the same time, the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta believes it is useful to commend these ministries by placing them in a category called *Confirmed Ministry*.

Therefore, when an ordained minister is engaged in ministry which does not meet the criteria for validation, the Committee on Ministry through its CVCP & ML sub-committee will recognize the ministry by granting it the status of *Confirmed Ministry*.

The status of *Confirmed Ministry* is an internal mechanism for the presbytery. Ministers will not be received on the basis of a Confirmed Ministry status. The status will be reported in the Admit to Record section of the Committee on Ministry Report to each presbytery meeting. For purposes of the General Assembly, the minister will still be considered a member at large. Congregations may also wish to recognize those serving in Confirmed Ministry at an appropriate time during worship.